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(54) Title: SECURE DATA TRANSFER BETWEEN A CLIENT AND A BACK–END RESOURCE

(57) Abstract

    Data can be securely passed between a client and a back–end resource by sending resource locators instead of the actual data. Using the protocol described here, the transfer of data is seamless, and prevents interception by any intermediate resource.

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SECURE DATA TRANSFER BETWEEN
A CLIENT AND A BACK-END RESOURCE

Technical Field and Background Art

5   This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application
no. 60/115,835 filed January 14, 1999.

In an on-line system, when data is retrieved from a remote resource,
each intermediate point through which it travels may conceivably access the
data. Even if such data is retrieved through a secure connection with a web
10   server, the web server itself will be privy to the data. While the web server
is beneficial in that it acts as intermediary between a client and a remote
resource, it would be advantageous to utilize the services of the web server
without having to compromise the data.

15   Brief Description of the Drawings

Figure 1 is a block diagram of a system affording secure data transfer;
and

Figures 2 and 3 are flow charts of the operation of the system of
Figure 1.
20

Modes for Carrying Out the Invention

Secure transfer of data between a client and back-end resources over
the Internet can be achieved in part by establishing a secure path between
the two points. Formatting and protocol issues not requiring access to
25   secure data can be delegated to conventional elements in the path.

In one configuration, illustrated in the block diagram of Figure 1, a
client 10, using an Internet browser 12 equipped with the means necessary

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to create a secure session, accesses a back-end system 20 on which a back-end resource 22 resides, through a client-accessible system 30. The back-end resource 22 may be a database or some other source of data or device that the client wishes to access.

5   The interconnection 14 between the client 10 and the client-accessible system 30 can be over a network such as the Internet or through some other medium. Similarly, the interconnection 16 between the client-accessible system 30 and the back-end system 20 can be over a network such as the Internet or through some other data link.

10   The data transfer process can be described in two parts: a download procedure (Figure 2), where data is transferred from the back-end resource to the client, and an upload procedure (Figure 3), where data travels from the client to the back-end resource. Either can be used alone, in concert with each other, or with other processes as appropriate.

15   Download Procedure

As shown in Figure 2, the client 10 can initiate a download of information by sending a request to the web server 32, which passes the request on to the enabler 24. In response to the request, the enabler 24 issues one or more resource locators and passes them to the web server 32.

20   Typically, these resource locators are addresses that point to data resources on the back end system 20. The web server 32 treats the resource locators it receives from the enabler 24 as data.

The web server 32 assembles a web page placing the resource locators in the web page where it would otherwise insert data. It then sends

25   the formatted web page to the browser 12 at the client 10.

As the web page loads in the browser 12, the resource locators cause the browser 12 to access the back-end system through a router 34 on the

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client-accessible system 30. After optionally authenticating the client 10, the enabler 24 will send the browser 12 the appropriate data in response to the resource locator, and the browser 12 will simply insert each datum in the formatted page at the location dictated by the physical location of each

5   resource locator on the page. The path between the browser 12 and the enabler 24 through the router 34 is secure, having invoked a secure protocol such as SSL ("secure socket layer").

The data has thus been sent from the back-end resource 20 to the browser 12 via a path secure with respect to the elements of the

10   client-accessible system 30 and interconnections 14 and 16, i.e., bypassing the web server 32.

Upload Procedure

In an upload, as shown in Figure 3, the client 10 desires to send data to the back-end resource 22, but in a manner in which the data is not

15   accessible or readable by the client-accessible system 30 or interconnections 14 and 16. To do so, the client 10 establishes a secure session with the enabler 24 through the router 34, optionally insuring authentication of the back-end system 20 and/or the client 10. The client 10 then sends the data to the enabler 24 over the secure path.

20   The enabler 24 does not have a service request and as such cannot utilize the data at this point. Therefore, the data is stored on the back-end system 20 for later retrieval and, in response to the original message, the enabler 24 issues a redirect command and a resource locator and passes them back to the client 10 through the router 34. This may occur through a

25   secure path. For example, the redirect can assume the form: https://ws:443/arg:xyz, where ws:443 designates the secure port 443 on the

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web server 32 and "xyz" is the resource locator that the web server 32 will use when referring to the data earlier passed to the enabler 24.

The client 10 now executes the redirect command, establishing a session with the web server 32. As part of executing the redirect command,

5   the client 10 sends the resource locator to the web server 32. Again, this can be done over a secure path. The web server 32 in turn generates a service request for the back-end system 20, using the resource locator in lieu of the actual data, and passes this to the enabler 24 on the back-end system 20. When the enabler 24 receives the resource locator, the

10   enabler 24 will fetch the data corresponding to the resource locator and associate it with the service request.

As required previously, authentication can be performed using any method including the method described in provisional patent application No. 60/106,290, titled "Secure Authentication for Access to Back-End

15   Resources," and filed October 30, 1998, incorporated by reference herein.

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What is claimed is:

1.   A method for downloading data from a back-end resource to a client via network-based client-accessible systems containing web servers, comprising the steps of:

5   sending a client-originated request from the client to the back-end resource via a client-accessible system;

issuing at least one back-end resource locator and passing it to a web server;

formatting a web page with the resource locators and passing it to the

10   client; and

reading the web page and retrieving the data over secure connections according to the resource locators.

2.   A method as set forth in claim 1, where the step of retrieving

15   the data over secure connections according to the resource locators comprises the step of bypassing the web server.

3.   A method as set forth in claim 1, where the step of requesting retrieval of the data comprises the step of authenticating the client.

20

4.   A method for uploading data from a client to a back-end resource via network-based client-accessible systems containing web servers, comprising the steps of:

25   establishing a secure session between the client and the back-end resource via a client-accessible system;

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sending data from the client to the back-end resource via the secure path;

issuing a redirect command and a resource locator, and passing them from the back-end resource to the client;

5   executing the redirect command and establishing a session between the client and the web-server;

sending the resource locator from the client to the web-server;

sending the resource locator from the web-server to the back-end resource; and

10   locating the data at the back-end resource using the resource locator.

5.   A method as set forth in claim 4, where the step of sending data from the client to the back-end resource via the secure path comprises the step of bypassing the web server.

15

6.   A method as set forth in claim 4, where the step of establishing a secure session between the client and the back-end resource via a client-accessible system comprises the step of authenticating the back-end resource and/or the client.

20

7.   A system for downloading data from a back-end resource to a client via network-based client-accessible systems containing web servers, comprising:

a back-end system comprising

25   a back-end resource; and

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an enabler, the enabler comprising means for generating at
least one resource locator, the resource locator comprising a redirect
command corresponding to the back-end resource; and
at least one network-based client-accessible system comprising

5   at least one web-server, the web-server comprising

means for assembling a web page; and

means for incorporating a resource locator in the web
page; and
a router comprising

10   at least one port corresponding to a redirect command
in a resource locator;

means for establishing a secure path with the client; and

means for communicating with the back-end resource.

15   8.   A system as set forth in claim 7, where the enabler further
comprises means for authenticating the client.

          9.   A system for uploading data from a client to a back-end
resource via network-based client-accessible systems containing web
20   servers, comprising:
a back-end system comprising

a back-end resource; and

an enabler, the enabler comprising means for generating at
least one resource locator, the resource locator comprising a redirect
25   command corresponding to the back-end resource; and
at least one network-based client-accessible system comprising

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at least one web-server, the web-server comprising means for communicating with the client and the back-end system; and

a router comprising means for providing a secure connection between the client and the back-end system.

5

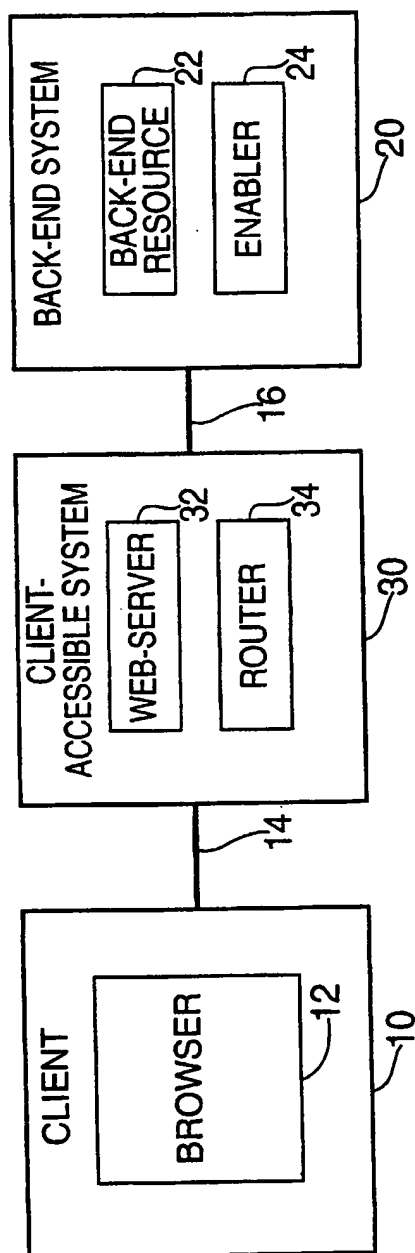10.   A system as set forth in claim 9, further comprising means for authenticating the client.
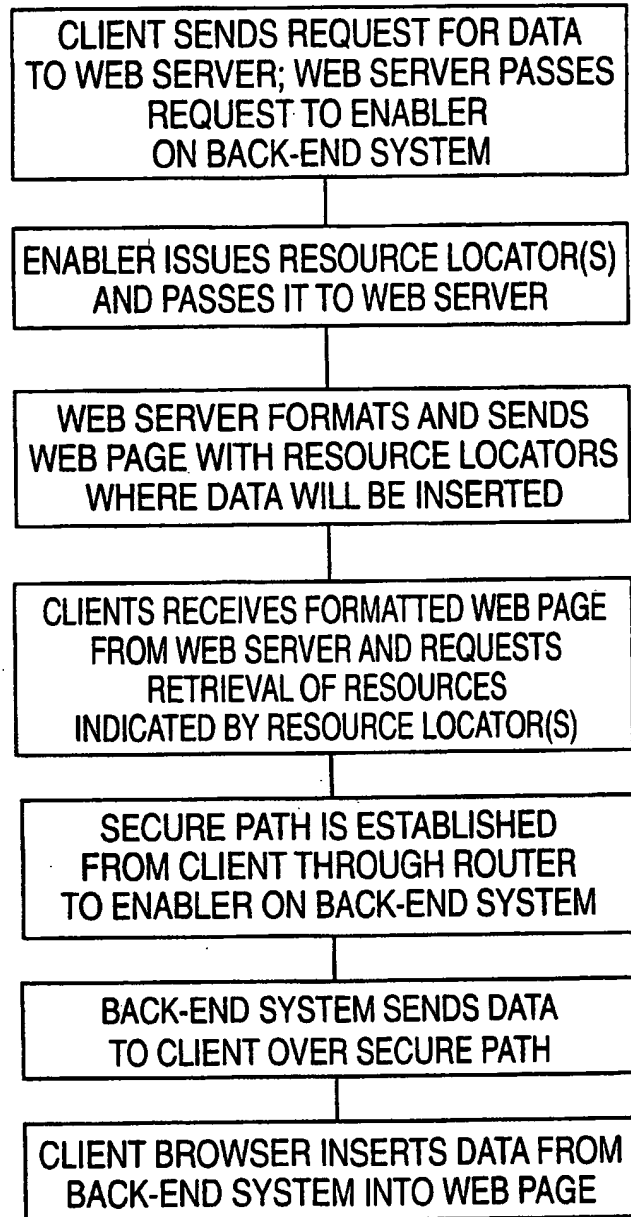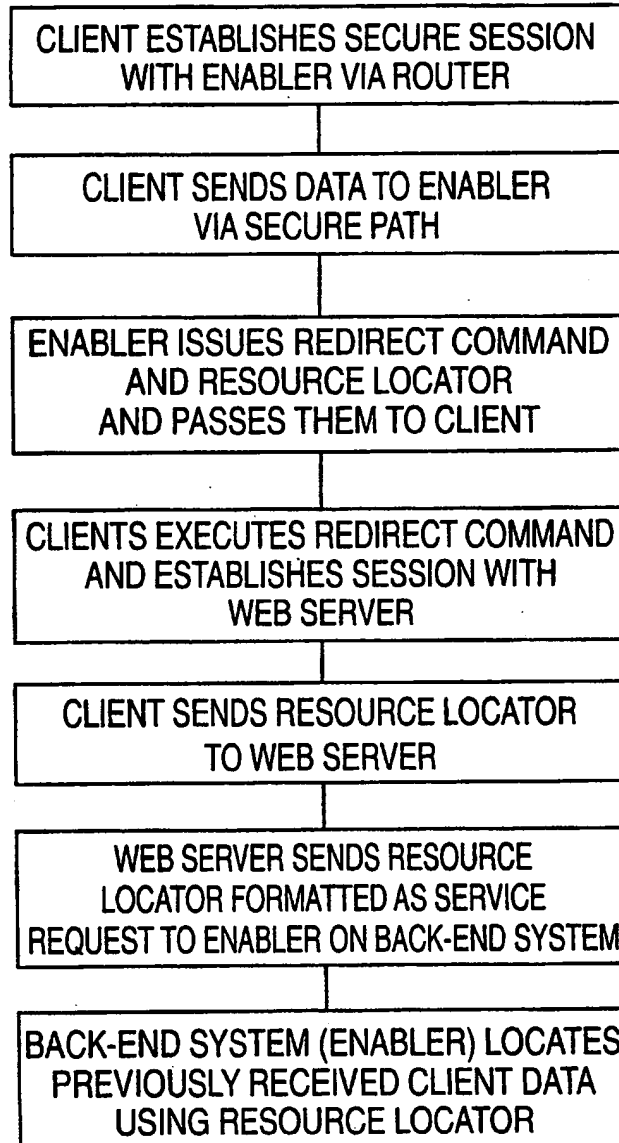
FIG. 1

DOWNLOAD
PROCEDURE

```
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│   CLIENT SENDS REQUEST FOR DATA  │
│  TO WEB SERVER; WEB SERVER PASSES│
│         REQUEST TO ENABLER        │
│          ON BACK-END SYSTEM       │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 │
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│  ENABLER ISSUES RESOURCE LOCATOR(S)│
│    AND PASSES IT TO WEB SERVER    │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 │
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│   WEB SERVER FORMATS AND SENDS   │
│  WEB PAGE WITH RESOURCE LOCATORS │
│     WHERE DATA WILL BE INSERTED   │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 │
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│  CLIENTS RECEIVES FORMATTED WEB PAGE│
│    FROM WEB SERVER AND REQUESTS   │
│        RETRIEVAL OF RESOURCES     │
│  INDICATED BY RESOURCE LOCATOR(S) │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 │
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│    SECURE PATH IS ESTABLISHED    │
│    FROM CLIENT THROUGH ROUTER    │
│   TO ENABLER ON BACK-END SYSTEM  │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 │
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│    BACK-END SYSTEM SENDS DATA    │
│      TO CLIENT OVER SECURE PATH  │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 │
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│  CLIENT BROWSER INSERTS DATA FROM │
│  BACK-END SYSTEM INTO WEB PAGE   │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
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FIG. 2

UPLOAD
PROCEDURE

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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│  CLIENT ESTABLISHES SECURE SESSION   │
│      WITH ENABLER VIA ROUTER         │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                   │
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│     CLIENT SENDS DATA TO ENABLER     │
│           VIA SECURE PATH            │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                   │
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│  ENABLER ISSUES REDIRECT COMMAND     │
│      AND RESOURCE LOCATOR            │
│      AND PASSES THEM TO CLIENT       │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                   │
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│ CLIENTS EXECUTES REDIRECT COMMAND    │
│    AND ESTABLISHES SESSION WITH      │
│           WEB SERVER                 │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                   │
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│    CLIENT SENDS RESOURCE LOCATOR     │
│           TO WEB SERVER              │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                   │
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│      WEB SERVER SENDS RESOURCE       │
│    LOCATOR FORMATTED AS SERVICE      │
│ REQUEST TO ENABLER ON BACK-END SYSTEM│
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                   │
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│ BACK-END SYSTEM (ENABLER) LOCATES    │
│   PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED CLIENT DATA    │
│      USING RESOURCE LOCATOR          │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
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FIG. 3

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| | | (43) International Publication Date: 20 July 2000 (20.07.00) |

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(54) Title: SECURE DATA TRANSFER

(57) Abstract

    Data can be securely passed between a client and a back–end resource by sending resource locators instead of the actual data. Using the protocol described here, the transfer of data is seamless, and prevents interception by any intermediate resource.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC 7   H04L29/06

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 7   H04L

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

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C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	EP 0 814 589 A (AT & T CORP) 29 December 1997 (1997-12-29) page 3, line 19 -page 4, line 18 abstract figure 3	1-10
X	WO 98 58332 A (ERICSSON TELEFON AB L M) 23 December 1998 (1998-12-23) abstract	1-10

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[X] Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.   [X] Patent family members are listed in annex.

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication,where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	KOLLETZKI S: "Secure Internet banking with Privacy Enhanced Mail -- A protocol for reliable exchange of secured order forms" COMPUTER NETWORKS AND ISDN SYSTEMS,NL,NORTH HOLLAND PUBLISHING. AMSTERDAM, vol. 28, no. 14, 1 November 1996 (1996-11-01), pages 1891-1899, XP004014500 ISSN: 0169-7552 page 1896	1-10

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Intern al Application No

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